

WASHINGTON TIMES
3 November 1983

ARTICLE APPEARED
ON PAGE A-6

Kelley spurns report of advance warning

BY A WASHINGTON TIMES STAFF WRITER

Marine Corps Commandant Paul X. Kelley yesterday rejected as vague and irresponsible reports that intelligence agencies had warned of terrorist attacks three days before the Oct. 23 suicide bombing that killed more than 230 U.S. servicemen in Beirut.

Quoting administration officials, The New York Times reported yesterday that an Oct. 20 classified intelligence report available to military officials had warned that a pro-Iranian Moslem group was planning a terrorist attack on American forces.

Kelley dismissed the report as "vague" in brief comments to The

Washington Times following an appearance on the disaster before the House Armed Services Committee.

He characterized the news account as "irresponsible," but then broke off, saying he feared becoming too emotional in his comments.

During his testimony, the general said he would like those "nameless and faceless individuals" (the administration officials) to tell him that they knew the Marine Corps headquarters in Beirut was going to be crashed by a five-ton truck carrying 2,000 pounds of explosive.

In his three days of congressional testimony on the tragedy, Kelley said the truck-bomb suicide attack was significantly different in technique from previous car bomb attacks, and could not have been prevented without advance warning.

In Beirut yesterday, the Marines shifted the main entrance to their camp used by the suicide terrorist, and set up a heavily fortified 130-yard maze in hope of foiling any more bomb attacks.

The new gate is the same one through which the bomb-laden truck passed before speeding into the four-story Battalion Landing Team headquarters, where it detonated and reduced the structure to one-story of rubble.

Now, any vehicle entering the gate faces Marine sentries and must be driven through a zig-zag route.

— Walter Andrews